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## FOUR CAUSES

### OF CRIME.

#### Bad Heredity, Environment, Industrial Conditions and Unenforced Laws.

(Dr. E. G. Gowans, in Advance)

Without further introduction let me ask your attention to the subject in hand. I shall begin with the four most important causes of crime, as follows:

(1) Bad heredity; (2) Bad environment; (3) Bad industrial conditions; and (4) A slipshod method of enforcing the laws. It is not my intention to enter into an extended discussion of heredity, and I am sure that while we must give to environment a very important place as a cause of crime, yet we must recognize that there is something in stock, we must recognize there is something in heredity. There are a few fundamental facts in regard to heredity that can be mentioned. Assuming that the father and mother both possess favorable characteristics, the chances are that the majority of the off-spring will possess those characteristics somewhat intensified, if the father and the mother both possess unfavorable characteristics the chances are in favor of a majority of off-spring possessing those unfavorable characteristics somewhat exaggerated. If either of the parents possess unfavorable characteristics and the other possess favorable characteristics the probability is that the unfavorable characteristics will be favorably modified so far as the off-spring is concerned. One cannot notice the effect of the use of alcoholic drinks either by the father or the mother or by both on children, and say there is nothing in heredity. Consumption, Syphilis, Lead Poisoning, and to some extent all debilitating diseases act as race poisons by attacking the vitality and resistance of the germ plasma and unquestionably producing an hereditary effect upon the off-spring. It is almost certain that criminal tendencies are transmitted from parent to child in very much the same way as health or disease tendencies are transmitted. Everybody who has studied the subject of criminology to any extent has heard of the Jewkes family which numbers seventy-five murderers and three hundred and fifty prostitutes and thieves, more than 70 per cent of the whole stock so far as it has been studied were criminals.

Environment in the minds of most observers is entitled to a greater share of responsibility than is heredity, and I believe it should receive a great deal of attention because of the fact that it is very much easier for us to modify environment than to change heredity. Under environment I would include the care and nutrition of infants and young children, the play, recreation, school work, and home activities of older children. Probably the word home embraces the greater part of the child's environment. Nearly all of the delinquent children in our state come from unsatisfactory homes. Now what is an unsatisfactory home? Homes are unsatisfactory for a great many reasons. Drunkenness is one thing that

makes homes unsatisfactory, either on the part of the father or mother, or worse, on part of both, and you may be astonished to know that drunkenness among women is increasing more rapidly than drunkenness among men. That may be because of the fact that drunkenness among the men has increased as much as it could heretofore. I cannot understand as a member of the medical profession why it is that so many physicians when they know what they are doing will recommend alcoholic preparations for nursing mothers. Drunkenness breaks up the home, leaves the mother to care for the children alone, and carry the burden that no woman or single person ought to have to meet, this also renders the home unsatisfactory. But there is another thing that is as important as any of these, the damning indifference on the part of the father and mother toward the children. The unsatisfactory home is the home that does not have the children's welfare at heart, that does not have a manly man and womanly woman determined to do their duty as man and woman, determined to discharge the responsibility which has come upon them by reason of the relationship they have assumed, to do their duty by the children who have come to them; and where such is the case it cannot be a satisfactory home. We have in the Industrial School a little girl, in fact the fourth of thirteen children, and the fourth of this family, so heretofore

in the Industrial School, and upon careful inquiry into the history a little ways back we find that this state licensed a drunkard, and so far as I am able to tell, a good woman to marry. I do not know that anyone can tell how many of the remaining nine will have to be cared for at the expense of the state, or tell how much the state and society will have to pay for granting these people a right to marry. It is an astonishing thing that women get the idiotic idea of marrying a man to reform him. We need to improve the environment of children by seeing to it that unfit people do not marry, and unfit homes are not established.

I am not going into an extended discussion of industrial conditions, but I believe that extreme poverty is one of the most important causes of crime, also, that extreme wealth is productive of crime. Such a relationship between capital and labor that each is suspicious of the other, and such industrial conditions as continue to produce extremes of wealth and poverty should be corrected because these conditions are a fruitful cause of crime. Time, however, will not permit of our discussing this subject further.

One of the most potent causes of crime, in my opinion, is our slipshod method of enforcing the law. We have a lot of splendid law enacted in this state of ours but too often it is not enforced. It is stated by good authority that in the United States in only two per cent of the total number of crimes are the criminals convicted. This is a very poor showing as compared with Germany where ninety-five per cent of murderers are convicted; or with France, where the percentage of

conviction is sixty per cent; or with Italy, where it is seventy-seven per cent; or with England, where it is fifty per cent; or with Spain, the butt of ridicule of the nations at the present time, where the percentage of conviction is eighty-five per cent.

Our statutes declare, for example, that a marriage with a person afflicted with syphilis or gonorrhea is prohibited and void, but every year there are solemnized scores of marriages where the men are suffering from these contagious and loathsome diseases and their wives are furnishing from sixty per cent to eighty per cent of the cases of pelvic surgical operations in our hospitals today, and who, poor invalid suffering souls, have not left sufficient courage to claim the protection of the law and have their marriage contracts declared void.

We have a law which makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to sell or give to a person under the age of twenty-one any cigar, cigarette, or tobacco in any form and this law further provides a punishment by fine of not to exceed \$100.00 for any minor who has tobacco in any form upon his person; and yet you may see, if you take the time for observation, any evening on the streets of any of our large cities dozens of young fellows not over seventeen, eighteen or nineteen years old walking along the streets with pipes, cigarettes or cigars as they happen to pass. So we

few law, the child employment law, the liquor law, many others and as a law, and them and note their conduct, are forced to the conclusion that it is our slipshod method of enforcing the law that is most to be

I am not here to say who is in the past—you know enforcement about that as I do; now as much to say that in so far as I am here future is concerned, far as the one course for us there is only must insist that the pursue. We charged with the responsibility of enforcing the law shall meet duty. These four and do their found to include all things will be of crime, and I would of the causes attention now to fill ask your that can be used as measures. First and most fundamental, I believe we should have a better standard of public morality. A careful examination of the standards of the American as a morality of convince any unprejudiced observer that our standard of public morality is far below our standard of private morality, for example, most American men are self-respecting fellows, they do not take advantage of weaker people in order to advance themselves, they pay their debts, they are honest and are altogether a very much to be admired class of men. If for example, in a public assembly of out and some big fellow would rush strong able on women and out trampling children what would happen, why newsboys would hiss him on the street—our standard of private morality will not permit of that sort of thing. But what year was that time she was on

about our standard of public morality? You know that we permit strong institutions, strong corporations, strong businesses, to advance themselves at the expense of their weaker competitors. Indeed, we do not question very much the public career of any man. We ask if he has succeeded, which means has he accumulated money, if so, we laud him and praise him because of his business ability and financial success. In other words our standard of public morality permits him to do this. Our standard of public morality must be raised, and I want to say that it will not be raised until the women of America raise it.

Second we must have a better condition of society, and by that I mean a better attitude toward the offender. Keeping in mind these things that contribute to the production of crime, our attitude toward the offender must be in accordance therewith. My Juvenile Court experience before coming to the Industrial School demonstrates that most delinquent children have come from homes that are over indulgent, homes where the father and mother did not understand how to hold these children to proper training, homes where fathers and mothers are too emotional, and so we find a great many people who think they must treat their children with such perfect love and kindness that there is no room for correction, and in some homes

they have no discipline whatever. Would you treat them unkindly? No, with the most studied kindness. Treat them with kindness that means their discipline, and try to hold them until they learn self control. How many of us have our own self control, and how many parents who have been licensed in this state to marry have learned the lesson of self control, and how many can teach self control to children. We should not be governed by too much foolish sentimentality in the application of disciplinary measures to children, and I say that these measures should be applied with all the kindness that it is possible to use, but the emotional sentimentality of some people is entirely misplaced when applied to children.

We need better enforcement of laws and we need better legislation. A few nights ago I was walking on the streets of Ogden and met boys from the age of twelve to seventeen years of age smoking tobacco. You can pass laws, and you did splendid work a year ago, and I give you much credit for it, but of what value is passing laws if they cannot be enforced. If you will permit me to be personal, I will say that five or six years ago I had the acquaintance of a young man and young woman who married and she was as beautiful a young woman as I have ever seen and he was to all outside appearances a fine young fellow. After the marriage they went on short honeymoon, and in three or four months they returned and this beautiful young woman was sick and thought that on account of the hardships of travel she was not feeling well. With a man doing a man doing that time she was on

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the operating table, and her trouble was such that she is deprived of the joys and compensations of motherhood, all due to the fact that two years prior to this date this young man had gone the pace and had contracted venereal disease, and notwithstanding the fact that I am sure he would have given his right hand rather than to have caused the woman he loved to suffer, he had done so, and his life is full of regret as well as hers. It ought not to be possible for that sort of thing to happen, it ought not to be possible for any person to infect another with contagious diseases as it is under our present law. There is another instance I might relate in connection with this; a young fellow told me that he expected to marry, I said "you shall not marry." "Oh, I think I will, the day is set and the arrangements made." "Damn you," said I "you shall never marry that girl, and if you persist in your determination I shall explain the situation to the girl's mother and that girl." I did so and stopped the marriage, and I would stop it again under the same circumstances. We need some legislation in this matter. We need finally a keen appreciation on the part of the people on the part of society, of our individual responsibility for the existence of all these things. We are responsible for that permit unfit people to marry, therefore, we are responsible for the heinous crime of crime. We are responsible to some extent at least for the bad environment that unfortunate children find themselves in. We are responsible for the existence of bad industrial conditions, and we must each realize this responsibility and then perform our duties like full grown men and women.

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